

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

Terms of reference

1. Summary of purpose

Accountable to Yearly Meeting in session, the Agenda Committee's role is to discern and plan the agenda of, approve the documentation for and the use of the premises during, and foster the right holding of, the annual gathering of Yearly Meeting in session. It also oversees the right holding of the periodic residential Yearly Meeting Gatherings. It is supported by, and appoints part of the membership of, an Arrangements Committee which acts on its behalf between meetings of the Agenda Committee and particularly during the annual sessions of Yearly Meeting.

2. Membership

- 2.1 The membership of the Committee shall be as prescribed in section 6.18 of *Quaker faith & practice*: that is to say, the clerk and assistant clerks of Yearly Meeting, together with any other Friend nominated by the Committee on Clerks to serve as clerk or assistant clerk of the next Yearly Meeting; 18 Friends appointed by Yearly Meeting for a three-year period on the recommendation of the Central Nominations Committee, one third retiring annually though eligible for reappointment; and one Friend appointed by Yearly Meeting for a three-year period on the recommendation of Quaker Life Central Committee.
- 2.2 The clerk and assistant clerk shall be appointed annually by the Committee, normally from among the Yearly Meeting assistant clerks appointed by the previous Yearly Meeting or nominated by the Committee on Clerks for the next Yearly Meeting.
- 2.3 The Committee may invite representatives of other committees, or other Friends, to attend for particular items.
- 2.4 The Recording Clerk, Assistant Recording Clerk, and a member of staff with responsibility for the children and young people's programme shall meet with the Committee, together with the member of staff designated to act as secretary of the Committee.
- 2.5 Other members of staff may be asked to attend by invitation of the clerk for agenda items which include their area(s) of responsibility.

3. Duties and responsibilities

The Committee is primarily responsible for facilitating the right holding of Yearly Meeting gathering in session, as set out in particular in sections 6.04-6.06 and 6.12 of *Quaker faith & practice*. To this end, the Committee:

- 3.1 discerns the topics to be included in the agenda for the sessions of the next - and where appropriate subsequent - Yearly Meetings (including topics whose consideration might develop over more than one Yearly Meeting), following consultation with and receipt of minutes or other representations from Meeting for Sufferings, Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, central and other standing committees, General Meeting for Scotland, Meeting of Friends in Wales and area meetings, and where appropriate including subjects initiated by the Agenda Committee itself;
- 3.2 arranges for the introduction of those topics in session and for support of the introducers;
- 3.3 oversees the preparation of documents in advance and other written material relevant to the agenda (*Quaker faith & practice* section 6.25);
- 3.4 appoints a representative of Agenda Committee to, and works with, the Children & Young People's Programme Coordinating Group and the Quaker Life Children and Young People's staff team to develop that programme as an integral part of the Yearly Meeting and Gathering and to foster its right holding;
- 3.5 liaises with the Swarthmore Lecture Committee and other bodies as appropriate on the arrangements for activities taking place during the period of the Yearly Meeting and Gathering;
- 3.6 oversees the use of the premises and other available accommodation for activities forming part of or connected with the Yearly Meeting and Gathering;
- 3.7 informs Meeting for Sufferings of its outline plans for the agenda of the next Yearly Meeting, and of the work of the Agenda Committee generally, having regard to the respective responsibilities of Yearly Meeting in session, the Agenda Committee, Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees as set out in chapters 6 7 and 8 of *Quaker faith & practice*;
- 3.8 works with Quaker Communications Central Committee, the Recording Clerk and others, in promoting understanding among Friends of the role of the Yearly Meeting and Gathering and in encouraging participation in them;
- 3.9 appoints the core membership of an Arrangements Committee to act on behalf of the Agenda Committee up to and during the Yearly Meeting and Gathering (see 5.2 below);
- 3.10 appoints a Planning Group as a subcommittee to oversee on its behalf all the practical arrangements outside Yearly Meeting sessions for each residential Yearly Meeting Gathering, determining the Group's terms of reference, giving it guidance on matters of policy, and receiving its minutes and reports as required;

- 3.11 sees to the reviews of the experience of each Yearly Meeting and Gathering, and considers and implements or recommends to others responsible any necessary changes in the arrangements for subsequent annual events;
- 3.12 works closely with Meeting for Sufferings, Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, central and other standing committees and other bodies, both through consulting with clerks and in other ways, to promote the right holding of Yearly Meeting, to foster the Agenda Committee's relationship with them, and to integrate the work of the Committee into the budgeted programme of centrally managed work of the Yearly Meeting;
- 3.13 delegates the implementation of its decisions as appropriate to the Recording Clerk and other members of staff;
- 3.14 keeps under review the longer-term evolution of the institution of Yearly Meeting in session and the pattern of its meetings over time (including also residential Gatherings), in relation to organisational and spiritual development in the life of the Society in Britain;
- 3.15 ensures that action taken by Meeting for Sufferings, central and other standing committees, or other bodies to give effect to the discernment of Yearly Meeting is reported as appropriate to a subsequent Yearly Meeting.

4. Frequency of meetings

The Committee shall meet as frequently as appropriate for discernment and accountability, with meetings fitting in the calendar agreed with the Recording Clerk.

5. Subsidiary bodies

5.1 The Committee may set up and lay down subcommittees and working groups, which shall report to the Committee regularly and shall have terms of reference and membership determined by the Committee. These may include a Manner of Holding Yearly Meeting Group, Nominating Group, working groups for particular Yearly Meeting session topics, and a Planning Group for a residential Yearly Meeting Gathering.

5.2 The Committee shall appoint annually three or more of its members to serve, together with the clerk and assistant clerks of Yearly Meeting and with two other Friends appointed, as appropriate, by Yearly Meeting, as an Arrangements Committee to act on behalf of the Agenda Committee between meetings.

The Arrangements Committee shall have the responsibilities set out in section 6.20 of *Quaker faith & practice*.

5.3 The Committee shall appoint annually one of its members to serve, together with other Friends appointed by Yearly Meeting, to a Support Group tasked with coordinating efforts to increase the accessibility of Yearly Meeting, which shall have terms of reference determined by the Committee.

6. Authority

6.1 The Committee shall work within these terms of reference under the authority of minute 11 of Yearly Meeting 2011.

6.2 The Committee shall satisfy itself that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that funds for its expenses in carrying out the functions in sections 3 - 5 above and for the central costs of organising the Yearly Meeting and Gathering are used in accordance with agreed plans and within the approved budgets.

6.3 The Committee shall ensure that its work is appropriately reported annually to Yearly Meeting.